Claim Summary

Claims 1-14 are cancelled. Claims 15 and 16 are amended.

Claims 15-18 are currently pending in the application.

Drawing Objection

Figures 1 and 2 have been redrawn to designate them as "Prior Art."

Specification Objection

The specification has been amended to indicate that the present application is a divisional of serial no. 10/079,262, now U.S. Patent no. 6,755,221.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103(a)

Claims 15-18 were rejected under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Pavloski et al. (US 5,844,683) in view of Yamaga et al. (US 6,390,754) and Weisler et al. (US 6,443,686).

The Examiner alleges that Pavloski et al. in part teaches a method of handling a wafer, and that Pavloski et al. also discloses a single optical sensor. However, Yamaga et al. and Weisler et al. jointly teach alternate equivalence of weight and optical sensors.

Claim 15 has been amended to clearly distinguish the present invention over the prior art. Specifically, claim 15 now recites that a load exerted by a cassette on a support member is measured by a plurality of sensors that are

integrated with kinematic coupling pins. Claim 15 also recites that the sensors are actuated only when a load is exerted on the kinematic coupling pins, and wherein the sensors actuate when a wafer cassette supported by the kinematic coupling pins exerts the load on the kinematic coupling pins but not when the load is exerted on any part of an upper surface of said kinematic support member without being exerted on the kinematic coupling pins.

The Applicants respectfully submit that none of the references cited by the Examiner teach or disclose a plurality of sensors that are integrated with kinematic coupling pins. In addition, none of the references teach or disclose a method of measuring a load exerted by a cassette on a support member, and determining whether the bottom of the cassette is present by sensors that are actuated only when a load is exerted on the kinematic coupling pins, and wherein the sensors are actuated when a wafer cassette supported by the kinematic coupling pins exerts a load on the kinematic coupling pins but not when the load is exerted on any part of an upper surface of a support member without being exerted on kinematic coupling pins.

For at the reasons stated above, the Applicants content that the prior art, cited by the Examiner, neither individually or in combination teach or suggest all the steps of the present claims. Therefore, the present claims are patentable over the prior art.

Conclusion

No other issues remain, reconsideration and favorable action upon claims 15-18 present in the application are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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